WSET Level 3 Award in Spirits

Day 3

A world of knowledge
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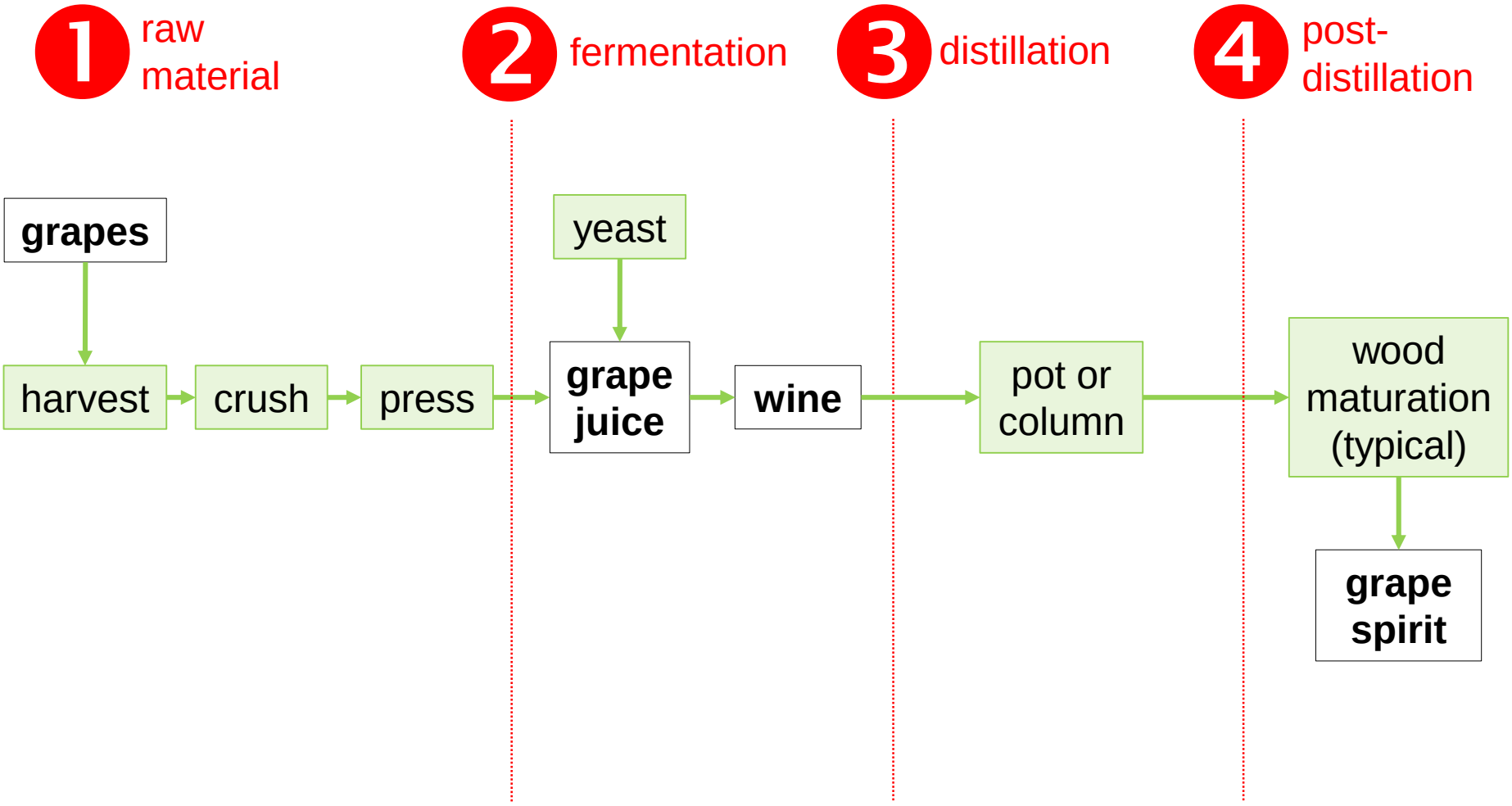
Session 6

Cognac and Armagnac

How are grape spirits made?



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Cognac & Armagnac
grape varieties

Cognac

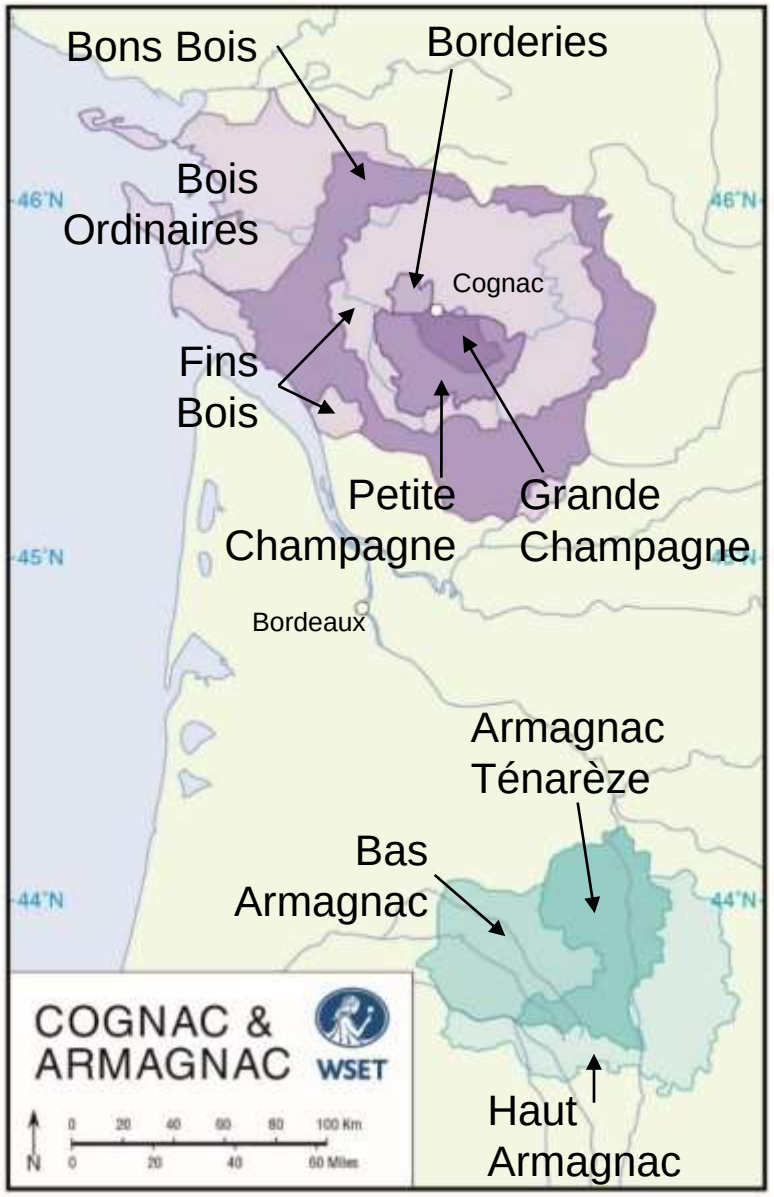
- Ugni Blanc

Armagnac

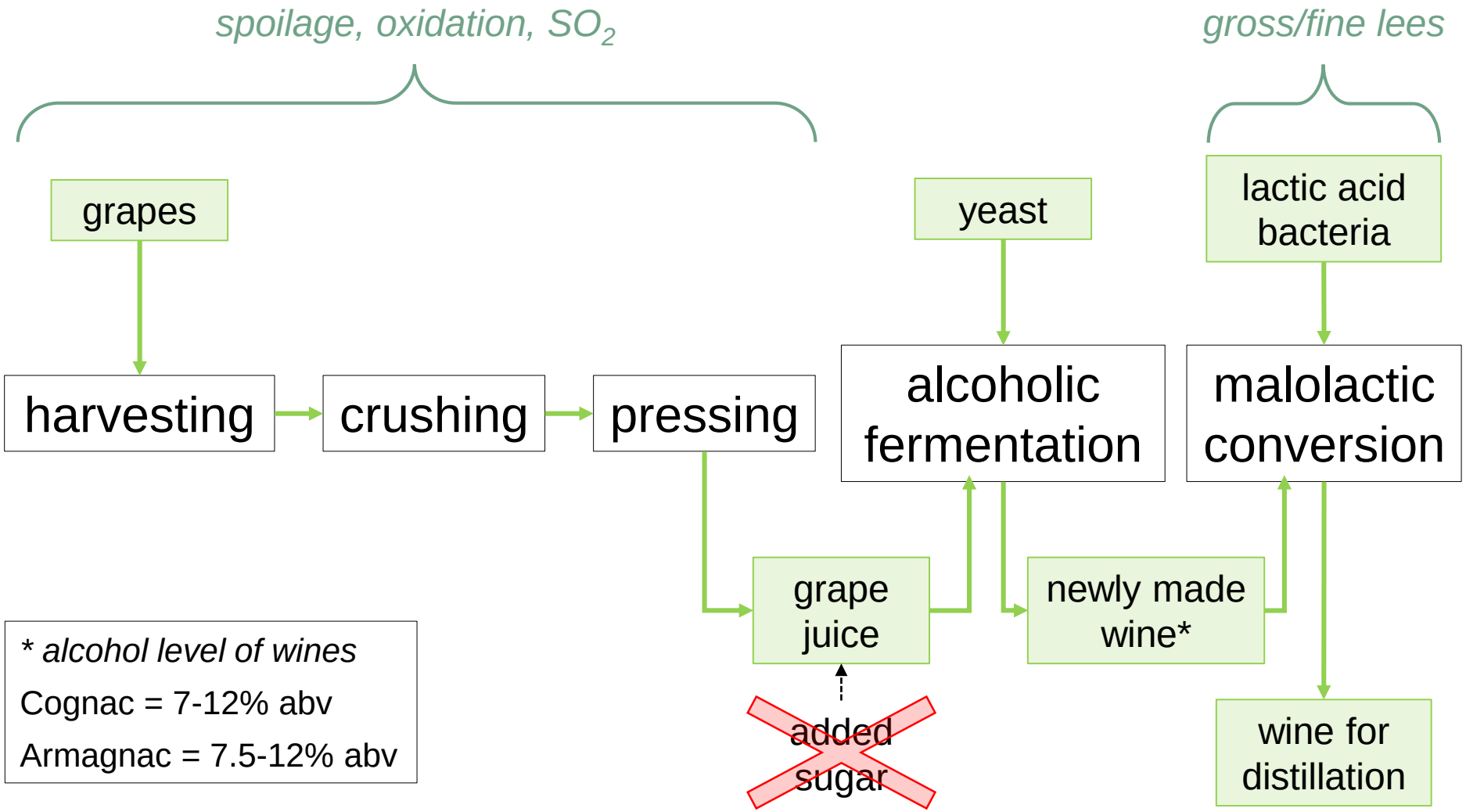
- Ugni Blanc
- Baco
- Folle Blanche
- Colombard

Cognac & Armagnac

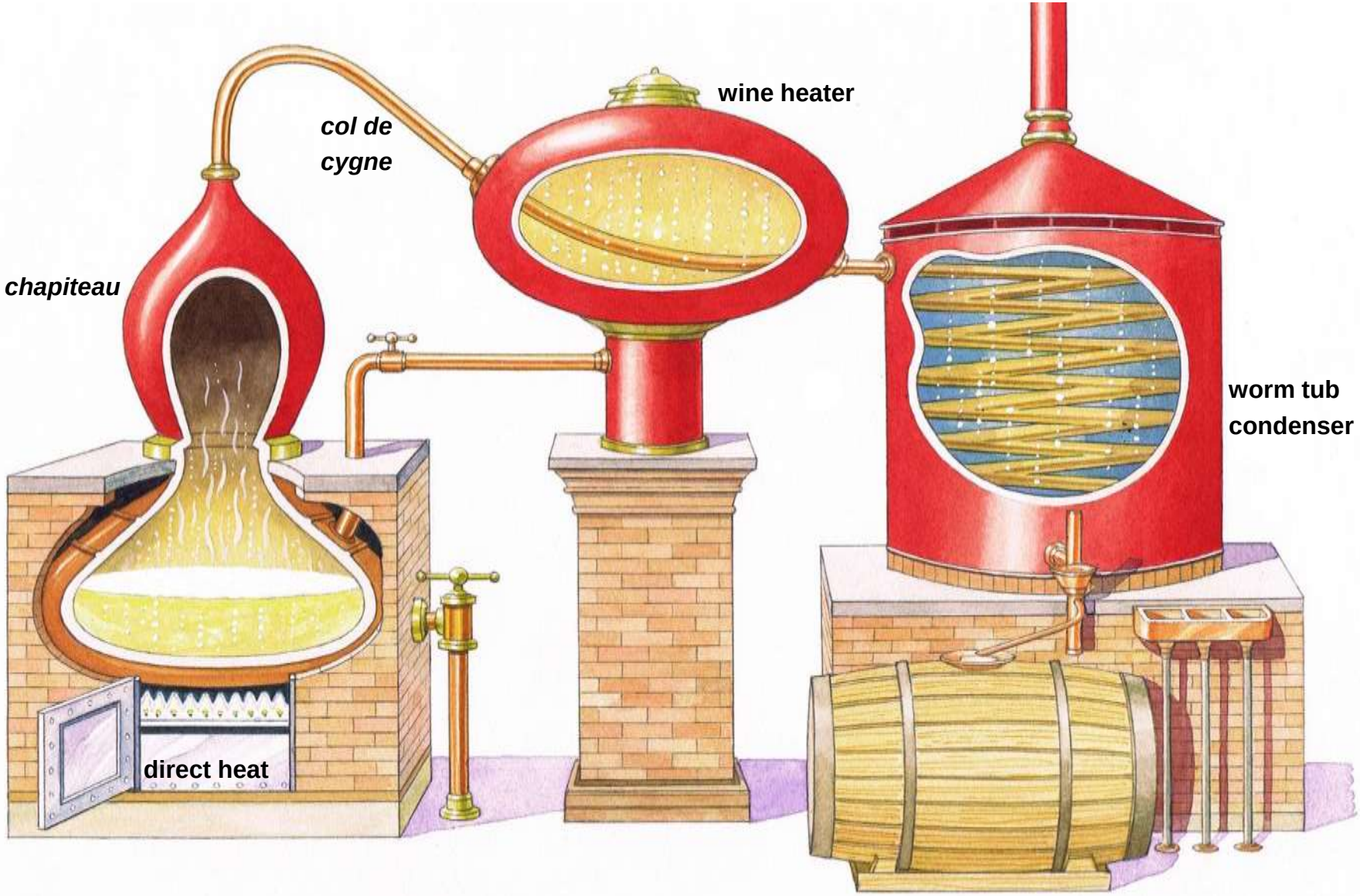
sub-regions and vineyards



Harvesting, crushing, pressing & fermentation



Alambic Charentais



Distilling Cognac
legal controls

Still size

- 1st distillation 140 hL (max fill 120 hL)
- 2nd distillation 30 hL (max fill 25 hL)

Still design

- open flame, all copper, worm tub condenser

Distillation strength

- max. 72.4% abv

End of distillation season

- 31st March

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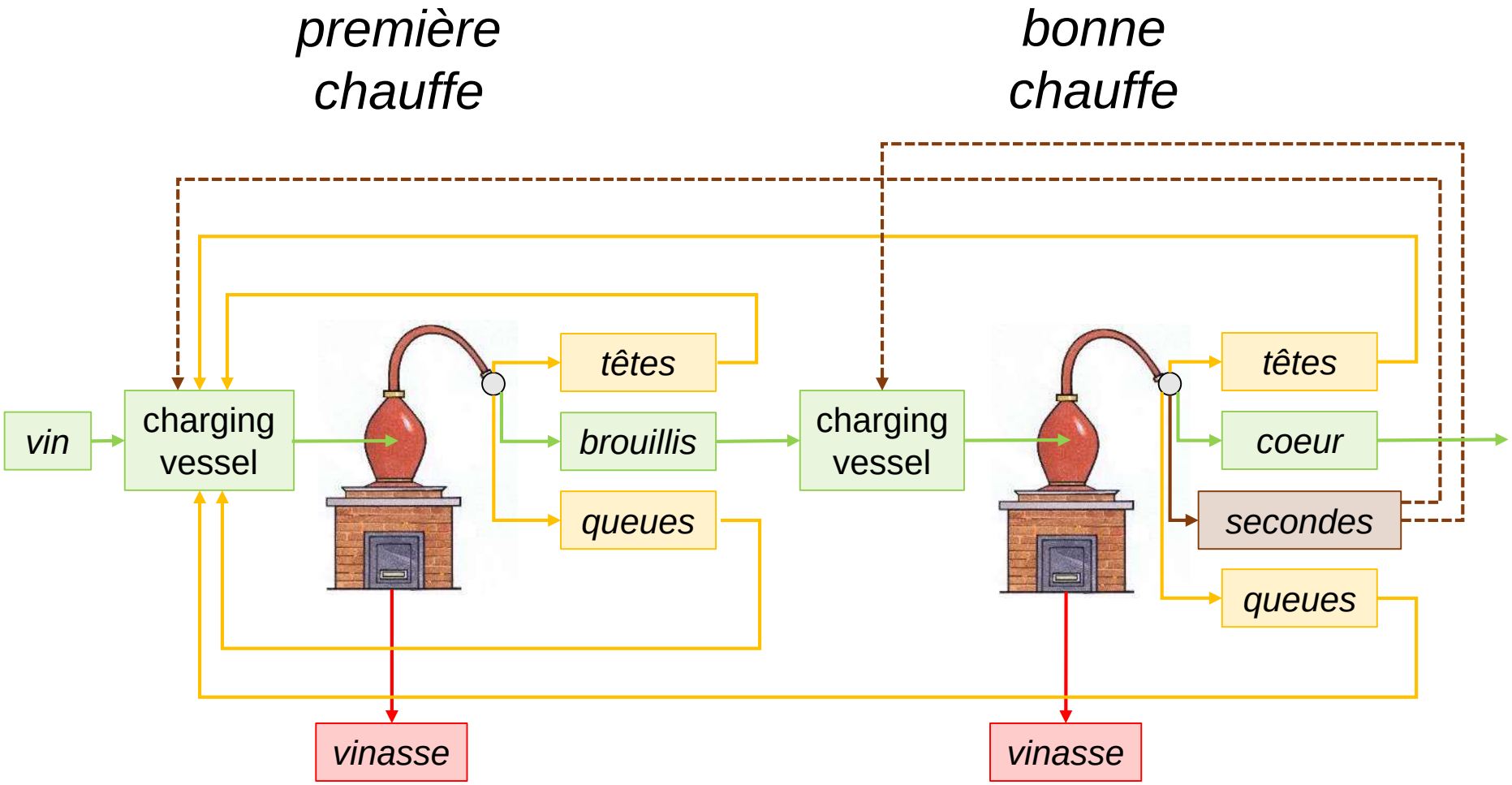
Distilling Cognac

double pot still distillation



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Distilling Cognac
options

Vineyard location

Who distilled the spirit

When the wines are distilled

- must be complete by 31st March

Fine lees

- exclude *vs* include

Recycle secondes

- *première chauffe vs bonne chauffe*

Martell

Rémy Martin

Distilling Armagnac
legal controls

Still types

- *Alambic Armagnacais* (distilleries must own and use one)
- *Alambic Charentais*

Alambic Armagnacais

- open flame, all copper, column, wine heater, condenser

Distillation strength

- 52% abv - 72.4% abv

End of distillation season

- 31st March

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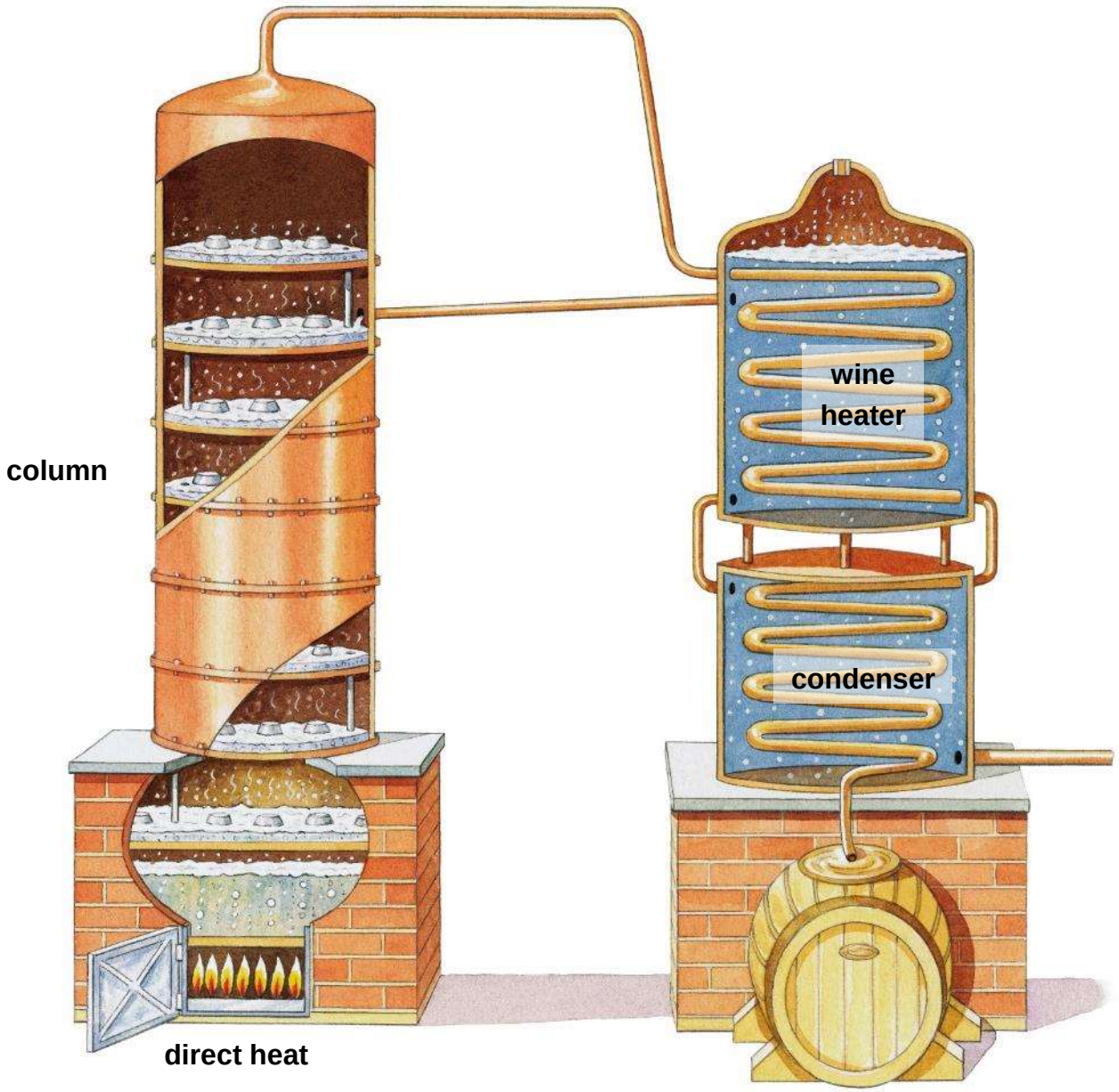
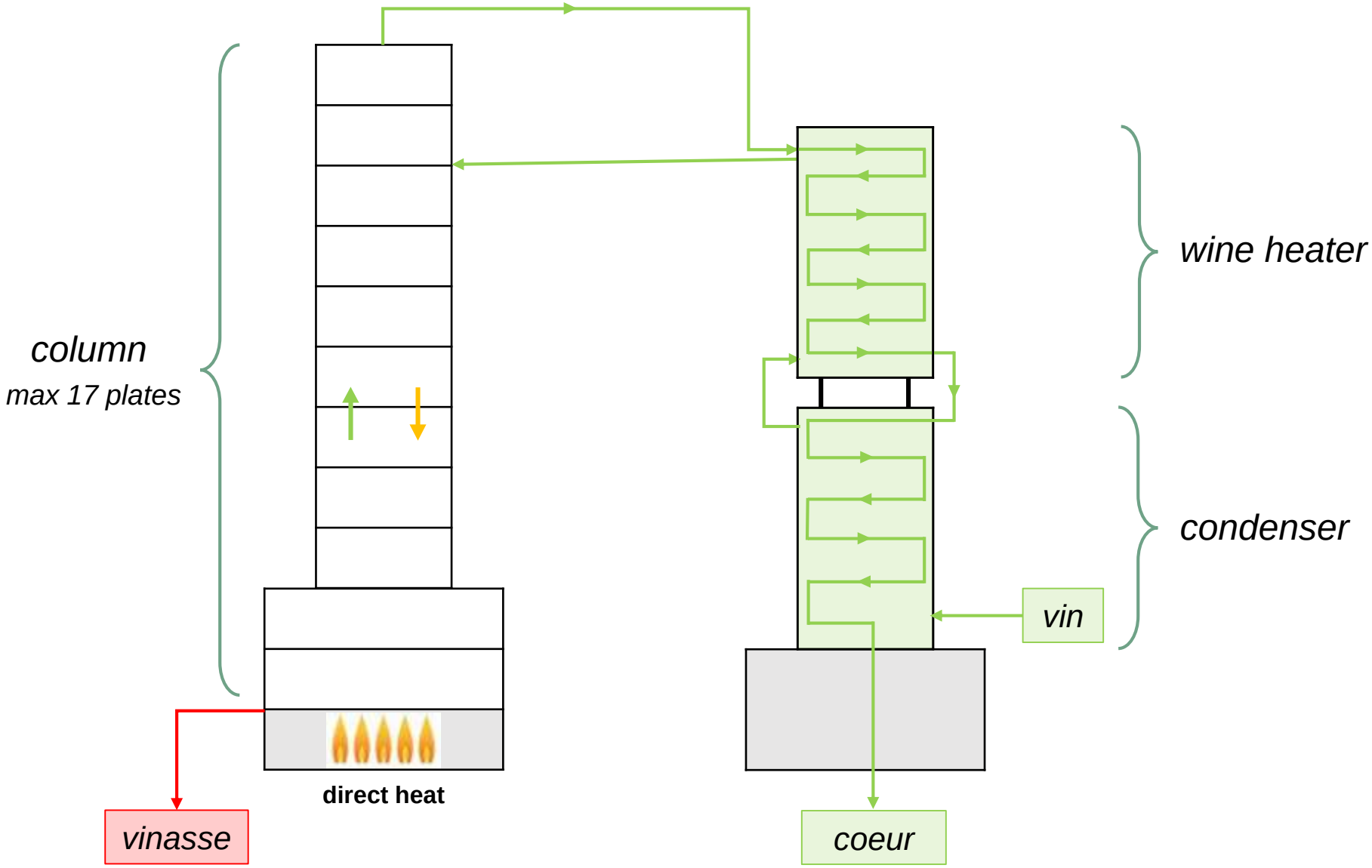
Alambic Armagnacais



Alambic Armagnacais

single column still distillation



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Distilling Armagnac
options

Vineyard location

Who distilled the spirit

Extra still features

When the wines are distilled

- must be complete by 31st March

Fine lees

- include vs exclude

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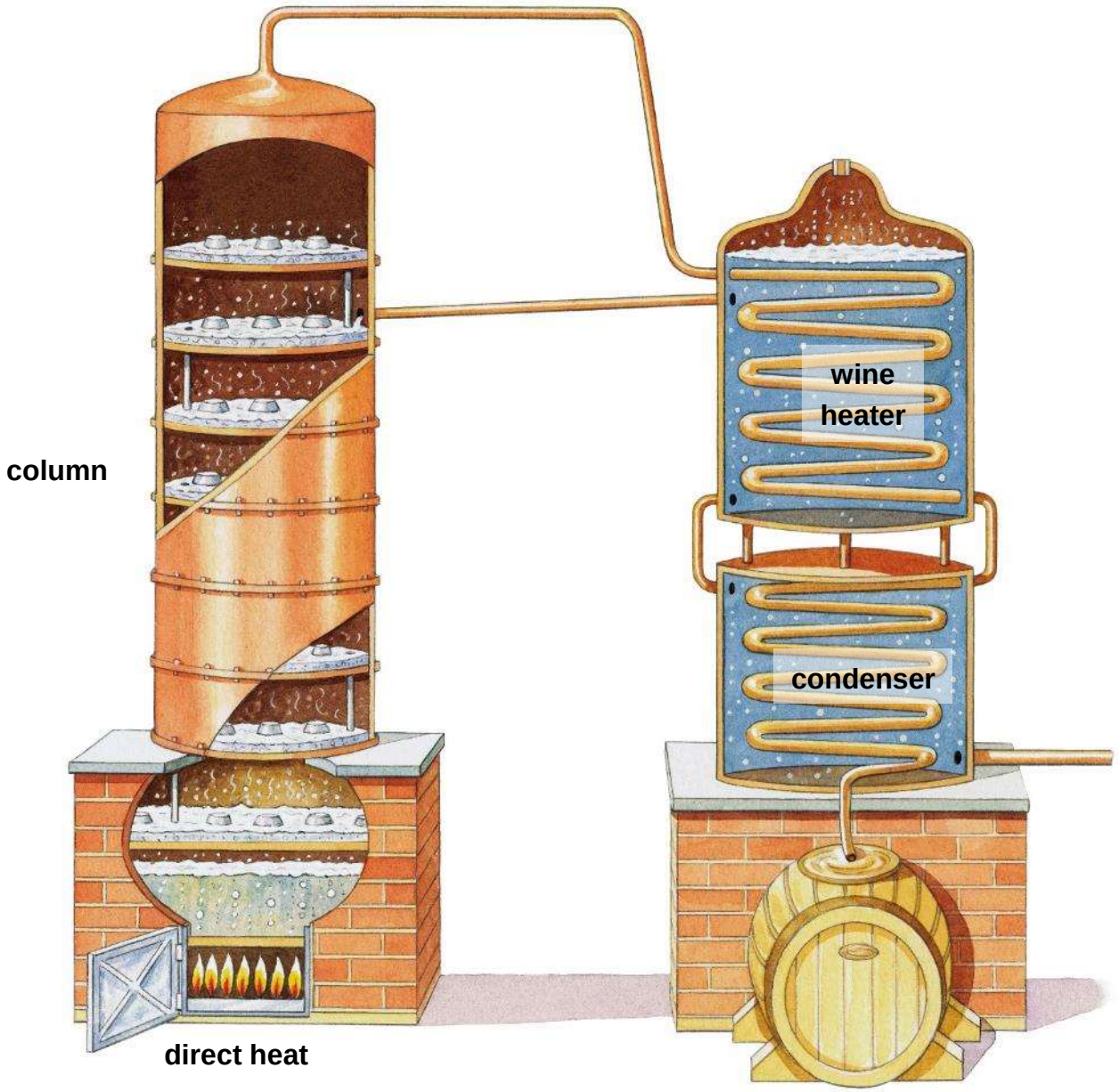
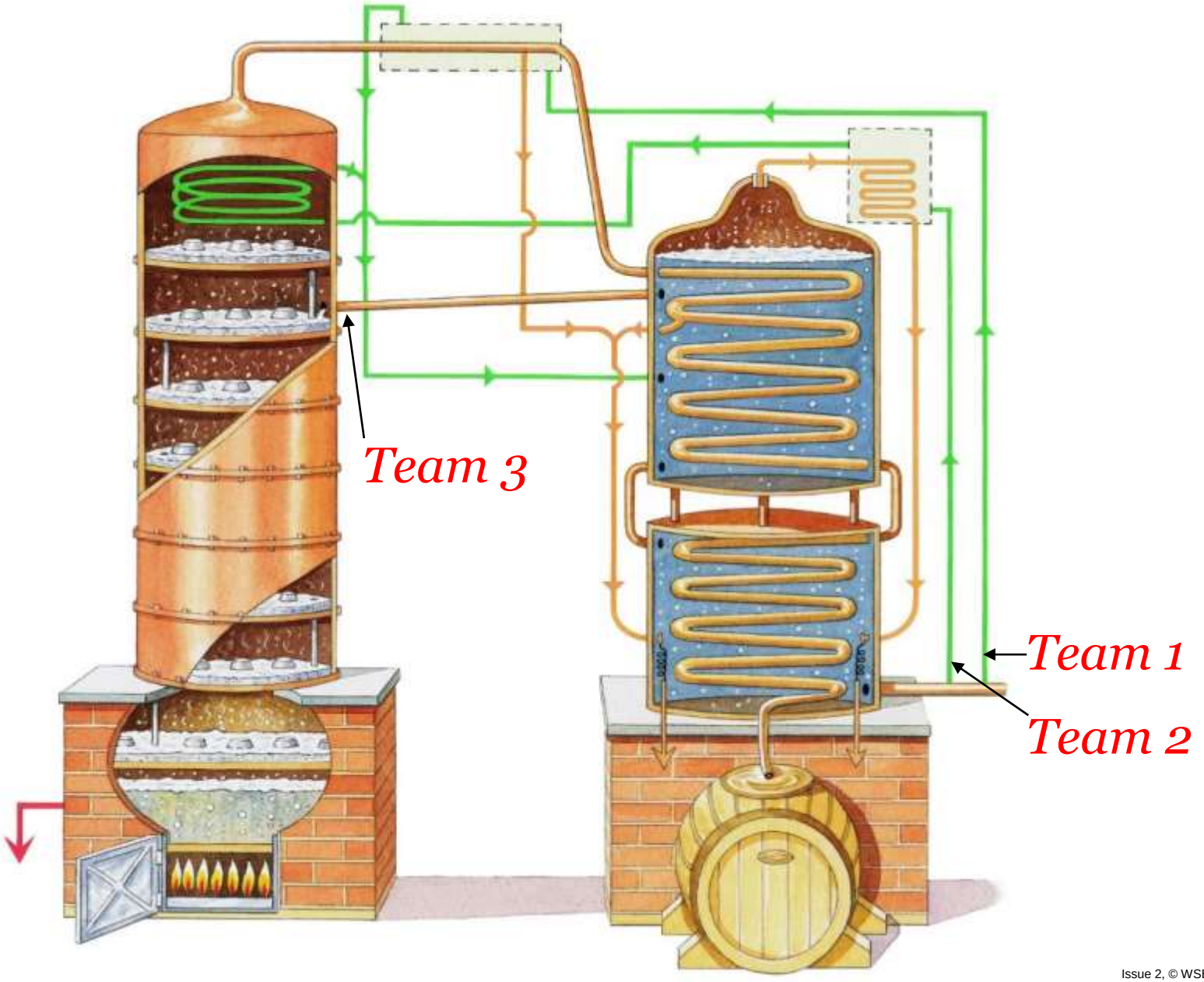
Alambic Armagnacais



Exercise



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Post-distillation

coupes

Barrel age / re-barrelling / inert

- new oak *or* old oak *or* stainless steel

Humidity

- dry cellar *or* wet cellar

Time

- barrel / demijohn

Additives

- syrup barrels / sugar
- *faibles*
- *boisé* / caramel colour

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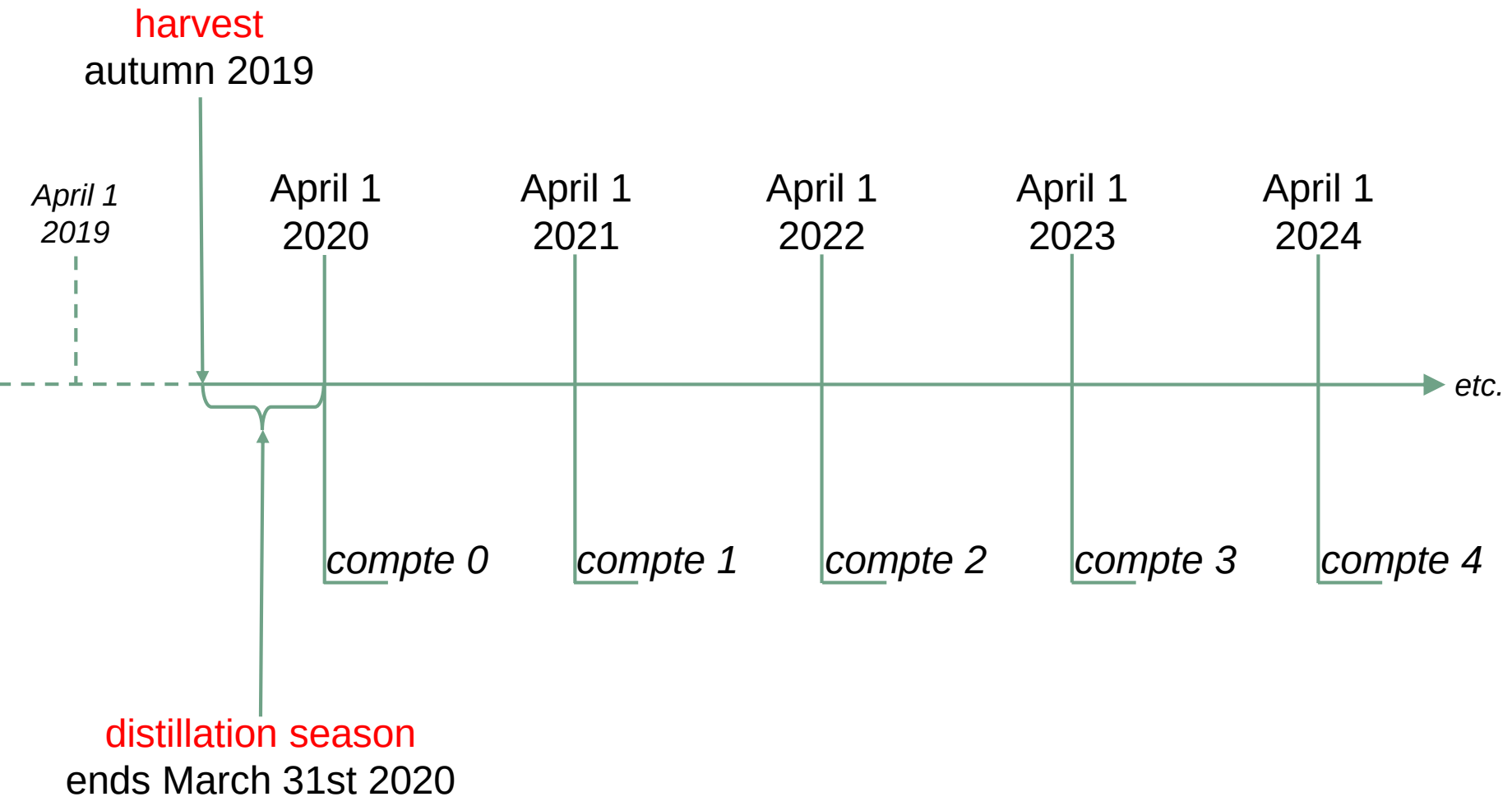
Cognac & Armagnac

compte system



Cognac & Armagnac
labelling terminology

	Cognac	Armagnac
min 3 months in inert vessels		*Blanche*
compte 1		*VS, 3 Étoiles*
compte 2	*VS, 3 Étoiles*	
compte 4	*VSOP / Réserve*	*VSOP*
compte 6	*Napoléon*	
compte 10	*XO, Hors d'Age*	*XO, Hors d'Age,* vintage, age statement

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Tasting

Samples

- xxx
- xxx
- xxx

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Tasting

APPEARANCE		
Intensity		water-white – pale – medium – deep – opaque
Colour		colourless – lemon – gold – amber – brown pink – red – orange – yellow – green – blue – purple – brown – black
NOSE		
Aroma intensity		neutral – light – medium(-) – medium – medium(+) – pronounced
Aroma characteristics		*e.g.* raw material, processing, oak and maturation
PALATE		
Sweetness		dry – off-dry – medium – sweet
Flavour intensity		neutral – light – medium(-) – medium – medium(+) – pronounced
Texture/other		*e.g.* rough, smooth, watery, mouthfilling, warming *e.g.* bitterness
Flavour characteristics		*e.g.* raw material, processing, oak and maturation
Finish	*length*	short – medium(-) – medium – medium(+) – long
	nature	neutral – simple – some complexity – very complex
CONCLUSIONS		
Quality level		faulty – poor – acceptable – good – very good – outstanding

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Homework

Complete the list of the regulations and the various techniques that determine the style of Cognac and Armagnac

- the list is arranged under the four headings,
  - processing a raw material,
  - alcoholic fermentation,
  - distillation,
  - post-distillation operations
- for each production stage you should consider
  - legally defined production steps
  - legally defined labelling terms
  - production steps where the distiller has choices.

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